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NOTE S.

THE chief characteristic of the American development of schools within the last thirty years is the decided improvement of the schools as machines. The national aptitude for mechanical invention has here been impressively exhibited. Both public and private schools have been better organized, and have been provided with better buildings, apparatus, and books; and the children in them have been more accurately graded with respect to mental size, capacity, and attainment — just as the chickens which come through the incubator and the brooder on large hen farms are more accurately sorted and grouped according to size than any single hen's brood can be, so that the stronger may not hurt or starve the weaker. Great improvement in rural schools has resulted from bringing the children daily from the farms by wagons into the central village, in order that one large graded school can be carried on at the center, instead of many widely scattered small schools in which accurate grading is impossible. This improved machinery would be a doubtful blessing, if its smooth working did not require and encourage the employment of a superior class of teachers; but the evils of the machine — the lack of attention to the individual child, the waste of time for the bright children, and the tendency to work for a fair average product instead of one highly diversified — are done away with so soon as a large proportion of teachers to pupils is employed — such as one teacher for from sixteen to twenty-five pupils — while the many advantages of the good machine remain.

The American idea that every child should go to school is not carried into effect in a single state. The National Educational Association has lately called attention to the fact that in the so-called Indian Territory, which is under the control of Congress, three-fourths of the population are reported to be without schools for their children. As regards school administration, there is great diversity of practice in the American cities. New methods have been tried within the last ten years in many important cities; but there is no agreement as yet even on such fundamental matters as the best number for a school committee, and the best mode of selecting the committee. In some cities the school administration has been completely separated from other municipal business; but in others the board of aldermen or the common council controls the school committee in its expenditures, and even in its appointments. So numerous are the experiments now going on in school administration, and so successful have been some of the most radical experiments, that it is altogether likely that the next few years will see great changes in the methods and forms of school administration. At any rate, the last ten years have been a period of active and instructive experimentation.

There are now a considerable number of schools in the United States which undertake to supply all the influences of home, church, and school, at the most impressionable period of life. Such are the endowed schools for the children of rich people, the cheap country academies in or near which the great majority of pupils must board, their homes being at a distance, the preparatory departments maintained by many western and southern colleges, and the private schools, situated in the country, which rely on boarding pupils. These numerous schools have prospered during the last twenty years, because of the increasing number of families that can afford to send their children to school away from home, and because of the great increase of the urban population at the expense of the rural. The contrast is strong between the public day school in a city, which spends on each pupil only from \$30 to \$40 a year, and the endowed school in the country, where each child costs its parents from \$800 to \$1,000 a year, vacations not included.

American school conditions are, then, so very different that one would hardly expect to find any general principles of equal application under such diversified conditions. Nevertheless, there seem to be a few unconnected considerations which apply in some measure to all schools, although they must be applied in different ways by parents or teachers who have chiefly in mind a particular child or a particular school. These considerations, however, though unconnected, naturally fall into two groups—those which concern education in general, and apply equally well to school training and to home training, and those which are chiefly, though by no means exclusively, applicable to schools. In the first group four distinct topics will be discussed, and then in a second group six mental habits will be considered which schools of every grade, large or small, in city or country, should endeavor to form in their pupils, with or without assistance from the pupils' homes.

* * * * *

The contempt in which cultivated persons have habitually held the useful or utilitarian in education has probably been due to the association of the useful with the selfish or mercenary. Now, the nineteenth century gradually developed a new conception of the useful as the serviceable, to one's self through others, and to others through one's self. This new conception of the useful ought to modify profoundly the whole course of education, in its materials, methods, and results. Humanism and idealism eternally contend against animalism and selfishness, and seek perfection. On the way to idealism, altruism needs to be cultivated in children to offset their natural egotism, and to enlarge their conception of usefulness, so that it shall be no longer coterminous with selfishness. In this view, the more productive the labor of children can be made, whether at school or at home, the better for the children. Any employment for children which enables them to produce something wanted by others affords training in altruism, and is therefore idealistic or humanistic, if the motive be made plain, and be enforced, and if the operation itself afford

either mental or bodily training. The child, from the first years that it can do anything serviceable to others, ought to get training in useful work both at home and at school; and the part of the school in this training should be planned with the utmost care, from the earliest school days. The main reason why the natural bringing up of children on a farm is better than any artificial substitute which city schools can supply is that the children on a farm get, in a natural way, this training in altruism and co-operative productiveness, while they help father and mother in their daily labors. The money motive of productive labor is not always useful to children; but the co-operative, unselfish motive in production invariably has great moral value, no matter what the nature of the work may be, whether washing dishes, shelling peas, bringing wood for the stove, tending horses, driving the cows to pasture, or weeding the strawberry bed. Producing something useful by its own labor gives keen satisfaction to a child, just as it does to a man. What Washington wanted to do, when he finally retired to Mount Vernon, was "to make and sell a little flour annually." Many a bereaved woman has found more consolation in tending a garden, and in making good use of the flowers, than in all Milton, Watts, and Tennyson. This wholesome human quality all schools ought to develop systematically from the beginning. There lies the solid foundation of the kindergarten methods. That is one merit of forging, carpentering, sewing, cooking, basketry, and gardening as school work. One of the advantages for children of reciting poetry, telling stories, and writing letters is that in such exercises they not only absorb, but give out. Enabling the children to make something or do something which is acceptable to other people ought to be a leading object at every school.

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It is no longer necessary, then, to confound the utilitarian with the selfish, or to imagine that whatever in early training is useful must be materialistic, or contributory to the animal or to other lower needs of man rather than to his spiritual needs. There should, of course, be careful limitation in the use of productive labor for children as training for their bodies and souls. This labor by children should seldom be pushed to the point of fatigue, and should never be carried on till it becomes automatic activity—such automatic action of eye and hand as makes piecework in a factory pecuniarily profitable to both employer and employed. The training motive of the serviceable labor should always be kept in mind; and the labor should not be enforced by the mere earning motive, or by fear of punishment.—From article on "The School," by PRESIDENT CHARLES W. ELIOT, in *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1903.

OVER one million pupils were enrolled in the schools of Illinois during the year ended June 30, 1903. These figures are certified by Alfred Bayliss, state superintendent of public instruction, who is now at work on his annual report.

The report will show that there were 969,414 pupils enrolled in the public schools of the state, 646,154 in graded and 323,260 in ungraded schools. In addition, 55,257 were enrolled in private institutions, bringing the grand total to 1,024,671. Of the 11,780 school districts, twenty-nine are unable to maintain schools, 116 have school less than six months in the year, and 11,635 have school six months or more.

In all 12,880 school buildings are found in the state, 214 having been built during the last year. Of this number 195 are stone, 1,863 are of brick and 10,803 are frame structures. Nineteen log schoolhouses also are still in use.

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NOTES

Of all the schools 2,174 are graded and 10,703 ungraded; 393 of the graded schools are classed as high schools. A total of 27,100 teachers was employed, 14,708 in graded schools and 12,392 in ungraded. The average wage paid to males was \$65.83 and to females \$55.62, the same ranging from \$12.50 to \$300 a month.

A commendable growth is noted in school libraries. The 6,890 libraries contain 807,985 volumes, 77,331 of which were purchased last year.

There are 646 private schools taught by 1,713 teachers.

The financial account shows total receipts for the year \$28,644,571.32, expenditures \$20,980,985.90, leaving a balance on hand of \$7,637,427.84 in cash and \$26,157.58 loaned. The township fund is \$15,715,607.78, with an income of \$843,303.68. The county fund is \$161,753.96, bringing an annual income of \$7,813.06.

School buildings and grounds are valued at \$56,612,707. The district tax levy in August, 1903, was \$17,595,218.61. County superintendents received \$117,738 from the state auditor. The county institutes were held at a cost of \$25,591.76. The institute fund has a balance on hand of \$22,055.82.

THE Executive Committee of the National Educational Association, pursuant to the authority conferred by the Board of Directors at the Boston convention, has carefully considered the several invitations for the annual convention in 1904. The city of Seattle withdrew the invitation presented at Boston, because it was found impossible to complete the proposed auditorium before July, 1904, and also because the local authorities deemed the available hotel and boarding accommodations of that city inadequate for the entertainment of such a convention.

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The city of Portland, Oregon, extended a cordial and well-supported invitation, which was favorably considered.

After a full canvass of the situation, the Executive Committee deemed it advisable for all the interests of the Association to hold the convention in 1904 in St. Louis, and so decided by a unanimous vote at a meeting held in Chicago, November 9.

The great promise of the Universal Exposition; the generous provisions for the educational exhibit; the well-grounded assurances that it will be the largest, best selected, and most representative educational exhibit yet gathered at any exposition; and the certain benefit to teachers which will follow a careful study of such an exhibit, as well as the other features of the exposition, were the leading considerations which determined the action of the committee.

The exposition authorities and the various educational and business organizations of St. Louis have united in tendering to the officers of the Association the most liberal assistance and facilities for the work of the convention, and for the comfortable and economical entertainment of the members.

It is proposed to modify the usual plan for the meetings by making the various features of the exhibit the chief topic for all papers and discussions. The presence and co-operation of eminent representatives of foreign educational systems are assured to assist in comparative and thorough studies of the exhibits which will be the prominent feature of the convention.

It is proposed to hold a meeting of the department presidents in St. Louis about January 1 to formulate plans for the convention programs.

The dates for the convention are not yet determined; three dates are proposed, and the Executive Committee invites an expression of opinion by the members of the Association as to the most acceptable dates, viz.: June 28 to July 2; July 5 to 9; or July 12 to 16.

For the Executive Committee,

IRWIN SHEPARD, *Secretary*.

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